

Teachers' Perceptions of Effects of Terminal Examinations
on Teaching and Learning at the Secondary School Level
in Zimbabwe

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education
Brock University
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Abstract

This study was particularly aimed at the examinations and the effect they have on schooling at the secondary school level in Zimbabwe. The views and opinions of teachers on the use of terminal examinations for certification and the influence they are seen to have on teachers' approach to the curriculum were examined.

The literature has shown that there is widespread criticism of the justice and effects of terminal examinations. It is argued that they lead to an over-emphasis of that which is measured, knowledge and intellectual ability, at the expense of that kind of education progress which is almost impossible to measure in an end-of-the-course assessment.

Three hundred and six secondary school teachers responded to a survey which asked for teachers' perceptions of examinations and the curriculum. The findings of this study indicated that teaching is structured towards examinations. Although teachers are trying to teach and develop reasoning skills and other activities, the pressure of examinations and the importance of doing well in them force teachers to restrict themselves to examination requirements.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all my instructors from Brock University, who for the past two years have provided me with challenges and encouragement that have made their courses vital and interesting.

I would also like to thank Dr. Kris Kirkwood and Dr. Glen Jones for their work on my thesis committee.

A special thanks goes to my supervisor, Dr. Patricia Cranton for her good advice, constant support and encouragement. Thank you for urging me to 'push on' whenever I felt tired and frustrated. Her constant support made this research such an exciting learning experience.

I would also like to thank my friends and fellow students Tracey Curtis, Carolin Kreber, and Tony DiPetta for their companionship and encouragement.

Many thanks go to the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education and Culture and teachers who took part in this study. Their participation made this study possible.

I would like to thank my husband, Charles Litseko, for his unwavering support, patience and encouragement, not only in this study, but in everything that I have undertaken. His faith and confidence in me were a source of strength.

Special thanks goes to my children, Kgotso Oswald, Liseli Vincent, Dikeledi Caroline, and Lebohang Rachel, for their patience and understanding. Thank you for being good when mother was away from home, which made this study easier.

I would also like to express special gratitude to Loveness Mafemba, my faithful and kind housekeeper/child minder for taking such good care of my children, giving me peace of mind which enabled me to successfully complete my studies. Friends and relatives who gave me support throughout are not forgotten.

Finally, my special thanks go to my parents, David and Evelyn Dingani for their sacrifice in sending me to school at a time when education for black people was considered a privilege and not a right. Thank you Amai and Tata for believing in me.

To my husband, Charles
and
children, Kgotso, Leseli, Dikeledi and Lebohang.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

This study examines teachers' perceptions of the examination system, in particular the O level examinations, and their effects on teaching and learning at the secondary school level in Zimbabwe.

The education system of Zimbabwe is modelled along British lines, and at one time, before the localisation of O level syllabi, the secondary school curriculum and examinations were designed and developed in Britain. As a result, the assessment of student learning is heavily influenced by traditional British examination procedures. The examinations taken at the end of four years of secondary education are formal, terminal, subject-based, and external to the school. They will continue to be administered by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate, a British-based examination board, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture, until the localisation process is complete.

Examinations have traditionally played a central and crucial role in the Zimbabwe educational system, so much that the way students are assessed is an issue of great interest to professionals, parents, employers and the general public. Examination results are used as a basis for selection for further education and employment.

Problem Situation

The great attraction of public examinations for students is that they are perceived by many as providing relatively straightforward information about achievement, and the results are based on a system that is thought to be relatively fair and free from major sources of bias or error. The overall effect is one of generating an obsession for academic success, so much so that education is mistakenly equated with certification.

The system of using a final written examination alone for certification is inadequate in that it may not present a true picture of the student's abilities. Parental anxiety that their children should perform well in examinations, and pressure from society for examination success are bound to have an effect on teacher behaviour. The teacher's decisions on the teaching methods, objectives, and the interpretation and use of the curriculum become wholly guided and prescribed by national examinations. Assessment procedures have a strong influence on both how the curriculum is taught and how students approach it.

Purpose

This study is intended to focus mainly on the use of examinations for certification, how this affects the way

curriculum is taught, and how students approach their study of it.

Problem Statement

The intent in this study was to examine teachers' perceptions of O level examinations and the curriculum at secondary school level in Zimbabwe.

Questions to be Answered

Given the importance placed on examination success in our education system, the following questions were addressed.

1. Is the presence of examinations perceived as a constraint to teachers' approach to the curriculum?
2. Do teachers see themselves as confined to examination requirements?
3. What effect do teachers perceive examinations to have on students' learning?

Rationale

There is too much emphasis placed on passing examinations, so much that one wonders whether there is any meaningful teaching and learning going on in the classroom.

From the literature on the subject, it is clear that people are beginning to question the justice of these examinations and the effect they might have on teaching and learning, more so now that success in them opens doors to further education and employment. My experiences as a teacher at both the O and A levels led me to question the fairness of terminal examinations, especially as decisions about a student's future are dependent on them.

Significance of the Study

Although many studies on this subject have been carried out before, very few have been conducted in Zimbabwe. This study comes at a time when Zimbabwe is in the process of localising the examination system at the secondary school level. The information collected about classroom practices would be valuable to those who study curriculum implementation and to those interested in curriculum change. At the same time, it is also intended to put forward a case for continuous or school-based assessment, to complement the terminal examination result, and not to replace it.

It is an acknowledged fact that the General Certificate in Education Ordinary Level Examination (GCE O Level) is a terminal one for the majority of students. Consequently, one of the long term educational objectives is to provide the many students who are unable to go further with skills

such as problem solving and critical thinking which will be functionally useful in the world of work. It is therefore hoped that the results of this study will help put into perspective the effects terminal examinations, as perceived by teachers, have on schooling and how this undermines the attainment of certain objectives such as work motivation, work behaviour and productivity, that are critical to the country's economic development.

Definition of Terms

Examiners or markers: teachers who are trained in the marking of examinations.

GCE O level: an ordinary level examination written at the end of four years of secondary education.

GCE A level: an advanced level examination taken at the end of six years of secondary education that also serves as a university entrance examination.

Localisation of Examinations: program aimed at taking over the administration of examinations from the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, a British-based examination board.

Zimbabwe Junior Certificate: an examination taken at the end of two years of secondary education.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

A questionnaire has been developed for use in this thesis. It was designed to examine teachers' perceptions of terminal examinations for certification, and how examinations affect teaching and learning.

There are some limitations connected with this study. First, and foremost, the instrument was developed by the author and due to time constraints was not pilot tested to establish reliability and validity.

Secondly, questionnaires were mailed to principals in 80 schools who in turn passed them on to the teachers. It is my assumption that the teachers were not pressured into responding, or for that matter felt obliged to respond.

Out of the 400 questionnaires, 306 practising teachers responded. Since there are no data on the 94 teachers who did not take part in the survey, it is not known whether these teachers are different in any way from those who did respond.

Another limitation is that responses by different subject disciplines have not been directly explored in this study. Even though such differences may be a factor in the results, this could be a focus for further research.

Despite these limitations, I feel that the results I gained from this survey are a fair representation of teachers' perceptions of the O level examinations and the

effects they have on teaching and learning.

Dissemination

One copy of the study will be given to the Ministry of Education and Culture, and another will be made available to the Examinations Branch of the Ministry. As promised, the results of the survey will be made available to the many teachers who participated in the survey and supplied their names and addresses. The principals who helped in the distribution of the survey forms will also be supplied with a copy of the findings.

Outline of Remainder of the Document

In Chapter Two, the related literature is examined to provide background to this study. This chapter is classified under the following headings: a description of the Zimbabwe education system to provide background information, examinations and learning/teaching, relevant and recent literature, and related studies undertaken in Africa.

Chapter Three describes in detail the methodology and procedures used in this study. The research design, instrumentation, the selection of subjects, and the methods used to analyze data are provided. Methodological

assumptions and limitations are covered at the end of the chapter.

The findings of the survey are described, and presented in tables in Chapter Four.

Finally, Chapter Five discusses the findings and conclusions drawn from the data analysis. Implications for practice, theory and further research, are discussed.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review literature on examinations and their influence on the curriculum. The review will start with a description of the education system of Zimbabwe, in order to provide background information, followed by a review of relevant and recent literature.

Educational System

The Zimbabwean educational goals must be looked at within the historical context of the country. Before independence, schools were segregated. As early as 1930, children of European descent had free compulsory education up to the age of fifteen (Nhundu, 1988). Most of their schools were built by the government. The privilege was extended to Asian children in 1938. African children had education provided mostly by Christian missionaries. At the time of independence, only 12% of African children were allowed to proceed from the seven-year primary system to two-year secondary education and even fewer were allowed to proceed to another two years leading to a secondary school certificate (O- level) (Nyagura, 1988). Still fewer yet proceeded to the Higher School Certificate (A-Level) which served as a University entrance examination. In 1966, there were only three schools offering the Higher School Certificate to Africans.

In the primary school, curriculum and material had undergone some local adaptation. The secondary school curriculum consisted of syllabi drawn by the three British-based General Certificate of Education boards of the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES) which examined students in African schools, the Associated Examining Board (AEB) which examined students in white schools, and the University of London Schools Examinations Board (ULSEB) which examined candidates in adult education i.e., those studying without the benefit of formal teaching at schools (Masango & Nembaware, 1991).

The education system was modelled on British lines. British syllabi were designed for the British in a British environment. Many traps had been set in the system in the form of nine examinations catering for different races. The purpose of the examinations was to make sure a small percentage of primary school graduates proceeded to two years of secondary and even fewer to four years of secondary education. This could no longer do for an independent Zimbabwe. The main purpose of localisation was to introduce syllabi that were relevant to Zimbabwe, consistent with its policies and national goals.

The first task for the new government in 1980 was to democratise access to education. The independence of Zimbabwe brought a new approach to the curriculum. The colonial education system was transformed into one which is

for equal rights and opportunities. In other words, the curriculum was designed with an egalitarian view. Since large numbers had been refused the opportunity to learn, the post independence schools were swelled with pupils. For example, the number of pupils at primary school level rose from approximately 800,000 in 1979 to 2.3 million in 1990, while the secondary schools' enrolment rose from 66,000 to 700,000 over the same period. This rise is six times and nine times respectively (Masango & Nembaware, 1991).

Curriculum Goals

By the time the Education Act of 1987 was passed by Parliament, a lot of its contents had already been implemented. This act clearly expresses the goals of the new government. The first goal was children's fundamental right to education. The second was compulsory education; coupled with this was the legislative provision for free primary education. The government realised that in order to achieve a total transformation of a society which had been divided along racial lines and antagonized over a long period of ninety years, literacy amongst all Zimbabweans was a matter of priority. Furthermore, implementation of projects leading to national development requires a literate society. This goal of achieving literacy for all is so important that the education budget has always taken the

greatest percentage of the national budget. The practice as observed since independence is that secondary education is available for all who can pay for it. Indeed, the statistics show a tremendous increase in this sector in all years after independence.

Table 1 shows the 1979-1990 enrolment statistics of primary and secondary schools.

The Education Act also states that there should be one curriculum and examination system for all schools, and classifies schools into government and non-government schools. Among the non-government schools are private or trust schools set up by companies, rich parents or education boards. These schools charged high fees, and by so doing excluded the majority of black children. Some of them expressed the desire to set up their own curricula or continue using British syllabi.

The Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry of Education and Culture was given the task of determining the curriculum within the context of government policy. The curriculum goals as outlined by the CDU are listed below. Masango and Nembaware (1991) outlined the extent to which these goals have been met.

1. Providing good quality curriculum at primary and secondary levels to all pupils.

A lot has been done in this area. It takes a long time

Table 1**Enrollment Statistics**

Year	Primary	Secondary
1979	819 586	66 215
1980	1 235 994	74 321
1981	1 715 169	145 801
1982	1 934 614	224 609
1983	2 046 123	316 438
1984	2 214 798	422,584
1985	2 229 396	497 766
1986	2 260 367	545 841
1990	2 300 000	700 000

to achieve this. At primary school level, the curriculum has been reviewed and most of the material is locally produced. At secondary level, localisation has improved in quality and relevance. The review of the curriculum is an ongoing process.

2. Guaranteeing the democratisation of good quality education at an affordable cost.

This has largely been achieved through unprecedented massive expansion and provision of free compulsory education.

3. Providing and developing a Zimbabwean culture, emphasizing national unity within the curriculum.

While this is not obvious in the academic curriculum a lot of activities at schools have emphasised national unity and development of Zimbabwean culture.

Traditional dances and the use of traditional instruments are part of school activities.

4. Establishing a strong scientific and technological bias within the curriculum as fact of Government's development strategy.

Many syllabi were adapted to local conditions.

Subjects like Building, Woodwork, Fashion and Fabrics, Cookery and Nutrition, Computer Science and Agriculture were encouraged. However, they formed only a small percentage of the curriculum. The numbers of pupils able to do them were limited by availability of

equipment and qualified staff. While in 1990, 170,000 pupils took English Language, between 2,000 and 9,000 only were able to take any of the technical subjects.

In 1986 the government spelt out the new structure and content of education to give emphasis to technical education. This programme was tried out in four pilot schools in 1988-89, 28 in 1989-90 throughout the country. The main problems were cost of equipment, lack of workshops, laboratories and lack of trained teachers. The cost of implementing the project may be beyond the country's economic capability.

5. Relating the school curriculum closely to the productive sector in Zimbabwe and in so doing, relating education to the world of work.

After independence the policy of education-with-production was enunciated. This meant that education had to be related to the world of work. For rural schools generally it meant that pupils had to work in schools' agriculture fields and produce food.

Industrial attachment was introduced for some urban schools. However a large number of unemployed school leavers have led many to challenge the fact that the curriculum is related to the productive sector.

6. Developing sufficient manpower for Zimbabwe's needs.

Post-secondary technical education was non-existent for Africans in Zimbabwe before independence. After

independence five new Technical Colleges were built in addition to the two polytechnics built before independence. A large reservoir of skilled manpower has been trained. A large number of secondary school leavers can now attend any of the five technical colleges and two polytechnics.

7. **Promoting African languages in the school curriculum so that in due course, African languages can encompass not only traditional topics but also science and technology.**

According to the Education Act, in the first three years of primary education, local (African Languages) or English may be used as the medium of instruction. From the fourth year, English is the only medium of instruction. The main languages (Shona, Ndebele and English) are taught in primary schools. The schools choose either Shona or Ndebele depending on the language of the majority in that area. The African languages are not yet being used as mediums of instruction except in the first three years of primary education.

8. **Integrating knowledge from different disciplines through practical exercises related to solving real life problems faced by the community. Relating the school curriculum to the community with a view to bringing benefits to both through the interaction of**

knowledge, skills and experience.

These last two objectives are difficult to assess. Generally, only in some schools with the initiative of innovative teachers have schools involved themselves with community problems. Part of the new structure and content of education is to build schools which, apart from the general curriculum, specialise in subjects related to local industry.

The educational policies of Zimbabwe have been influenced by its socialist ideology but must be seen against the background of an inherited strong education system backed up by an equally strong colonial capitalist economic infrastructure. As Maravanyika (1990) noted, this inherited colonial infrastructure has tended to influence and shape the people's perceptions of what they regard as desirable post-independence social, economic, political and educational goals. This dichotomy should be taken note of when appraising the post independent educational policy.

In spite of the post independence enunciations that education should develop along socialist lines, more has been achieved in quantitative change of the inherited system than in its qualitative transformation. Factors such as parental wishes for their children to have more of the education they had been denied, shortages of both human and material resources to implement the new policies, have resulted in a situation where, so far, few qualitative

changes have taken place.

Examination System

The system of examination is heavily influenced by traditional British examination procedures. The examinations are formal, terminal, subject-based and external to the school, and are administered by the Examination Branch of the Ministry of Education and Culture in collaboration with UCLES. Each syllabus is published in a standard format which sets out aims, assessment objectives, scheme of examination and content. It also suggests methodologies, at times by means of a supporting booklet. This form of syllabus package is regarded as essential to assist the many new teachers who are recruited each year for the expanding O level classes. Examinations play a very crucial role in selecting the students who will obtain places that are available as one proceeds through the system. They are also used for certification and employers take account of students' education achievements, as indicated by the certificates they obtained. However, as Kelleghan and Greaney (1992) observed, while the lower level certificates were of some value in the past, they are now losing their currency value in today's limited job market to higher examination certificates.

Zimbabwe inherited an examination structure from the

British through the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations which influenced the curriculum and teaching and learning methods in the schools. During colonial rule, public examinations were introduced at key levels to restrict the opportunities, especially of black people, to move upwards in the system. Despite a general expansion in educational opportunities since independence, the greatest expansion has taken place in primary and secondary education resulting in an educational pyramid which is broad at the lower levels and thereafter narrows dramatically at the post-secondary and tertiary levels. A restrictive opportunity structure at the upper levels places pressure on performance at the major exit points into university and the labour market. The education system in Zimbabwe and Third World countries as a whole has been linked to the labour market through entry to most modern jobs, which are usually the best, by depending on a minimum level of schooling. As Oxenham and Brooke (1984) observed, the higher the job rank in terms of responsibility, remuneration and prospects, the higher the level of schooling deemed necessary. The correspondence between level of schooling, job status and income is very closely knit; an increment in schooling is rewarded with an increment in occupational status.

In a number of research studies of the Malaysian society, Singh, Marimuthu and Makherjee (1988) confirmed the positive correlation between educational qualification,

occupation and income. These three variables were demonstrated to be closely intermeshed, and this has placed a very high premium on educational credentials in the movement of individuals into employment.

In 1984 the Government decided to localise the O level examination system. With the help of UCLES, setters and markers have been trained and are already producing question papers. Since 1984, over 5,000 markers have been trained to mark the O level examinations. For the first time in 1989, the grading of these examinations was done in Zimbabwe. This involved Zimbabwean chief examiners and a Consultant from UCLES. This can be seen as a remarkable achievement of the goal of full control of examinations by the Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe.

Examinations and Learning

One implicit function of examinations is clearly related to accountability. Schools and teachers with good examination results are regarded as "good" schools and "good" teachers. In some schools decisions to admit students are made on the basis of examination results. In general, examinations are perceived as fair and impartial and serve to legitimize the allocation of scarce educational resources; at the same time it would seem that they can have serious negative effects on the educational process, and

these have been documented to some extent in a synthesis report by Kelleghan and Greaney (1992) for the World Bank of studies undertaken in fourteen African countries. The observations made are similar to those made elsewhere in the world for several years that subjects, topics and skills, if not covered by the examination, even though specified in the curriculum, will be ignored in classroom teaching. Many problems with curriculum and instruction seem to stem from the inordinate emphasis given to the preparation for terminal examinations which undermines the attainment of certain objectives that are critical to the country's economic development. The examination heavily emphasizes the accumulation of factual knowledge and neglects reasoning skills and problem-solving activities. The pressure of examinations and the importance of doing well in them may contribute to the high rate of repetition of classes and of examinations.

Singh et al. (1988) provide ample evidence pertaining to the overwhelming, almost obsessional, concern with examinations and superior performance in both school and home. Teachers constantly refer to examinations while teaching, additional classes are held before public examinations, and a great deal of publicity is given to these examinations as well as to students' results. In school the total teaching-learning process is geared generally to the examination syllabi and more specifically

to the skills demanded in these examinations which place heavy reliance on memory, recall, reproduction, drill, model answers and knowing what examiners want or expect.

The pressure to do well is felt from all quarters, parents, teachers, the school and the community. The major activity at home entails homework and school-related activities. Parents watch or monitor grades and treat all examinations with great concern. The assessment-dominated home climate is further reinforced by private tuition after school, Singh et al. (1988) observed. Quite clearly the focus is on passing examinations with high marks and obtaining the right credentials, rather than the actual educative process.

Inevitably the content and form of the examination exert a powerful impact on teaching and learning in schools, as examinations do. In the Chinese system, the examination is called "the baton," as it directs the teaching and learning at which it points. The baton can be wielded with beneficial and detrimental effects. Commenting on the examination system in China, Oxenham and Brooke (1984) and Dore (1976) observed that the school curriculum is organized strictly according to the subject disciplines defined by the examinable subjects. Teaching and learning is dominated by traditional pedagogical techniques which depend heavily on "chalk and talk." Much teaching takes place by following national textbooks page by page and teachers repeat the

material in the books.

Lewin and Lu (1988) made similar comments that the principal activities for the students are listening, taking notes and reading the textbook. Active involvement, designing, exploration, problem solving, collecting evidence and experimentation are rare events. For the schools, the lack of examinability of a topic inevitably means that it will not be a significant part of the school curriculum.

Dore (1976) made three basic assumption pertaining to the relationship between education and the labour market. Qualifications represent the primary recruitment criteria into the labour market; those with better qualifications stand a better chance of entering the prestigious occupations. Since qualifications are the prerequisite for employment, the acquisition of qualifications assumes primacy in the schooling process; all learning is motivated by the desire to obtain good credentials. Learning orientation or motivation in school has a long term effect on work motivation, work behaviour and consequently productivity of workers.

Productivity, thus, is as much the outcome of the reason why a person learns as the content or skills that he/she acquires. Why individuals learn determines why they work and how effectively they work. Those who have indulged in learning merely as qualification earning reduce the learning process to being ritualistic, tedious, suffused

with anxiety and boredom, destructive of curiosity and imagination (Singh et al., Marimuthu & Mukherjee, 1988, p. 178).

Relevant Research

Empirical studies have focused on the ill effects of examination-dominated education systems of the world, with special attention on developing countries which inherited many of the school and examination features of the western society. These studies focused on the basic distinction between schooling which is only for qualification - a mere process of certification - and the process of education which has mastery of knowledge as its object. The primary objectives were to delineate the complex nature of learning motivations and demonstrate the dominance of examination in less developed countries and in Great Britain whose education system is heavily geared toward examinations (Singh et al., 1988, p. 178).

In an extensive study of the examination system in Britain, Murphy and Torrance (1988) noted that by the beginning of the 1980s many educationalists and industrialists alike were arguing that the educational institutions generally, and secondary schools in particular, were narrow and unresponsive to the needs of the majority of students from one point of view, and to the needs of

industry from the other. This led to an argument over the appropriateness of the educational provision and the variability of educational achievement around the country, with the examination system being seen by various critics as, at best, a fairly narrow and minimally meaningful guarantor of excellence, at worst a crude and restrictive barrier placed in the way of both pupil achievement and curriculum development. They further point out that these arguments stemmed from employer dissatisfaction with the meaningless grades and titles on certificates, and more largely from within the educational community itself, as attention alighted on the problems of curriculum development.

The claims about the role of examinations have a long history and can be traced back to debates about the narrowing "backwash" effects of examinations in Britain. Broadfoot (1979) argues that assessment commonly has a backwash effect on the curriculum and on the process of teaching and learning that goes on within it. Assessment therefore operationalizes educational goals as much as it reflects them. Burgess and Adams (1980) argued that examinations led to a restricted curriculum and a restricted view of what was worth teaching and learning in secondary school. Thus many worthwhile aspects of education such as the capacity to act responsibly, to cooperate, to initiate activities, and to solve problems were undervalued as

educational goals and achievements of young people, precisely because they were not examined. They further argued that the possibility of offering students detailed feedback on their progress and of thus contributing to learning went largely unexplored, as schools accepted that a defining characteristic of assessment was that it should be an end-of-course summative affair, organized to facilitate the social function of selection, rather than the educational function of promoting learning.

Burgess and Adams (1980) and Mortimore and Mortimore (1984) argued that public examinations at 16+ have a major influence in distorting the curriculum and pupils' perceptions of successful achievement in comprehensive schools in such a way that a large proportion of secondary-school children become disillusioned and leave school with a general sense of alienation and failure.

Detailed empirical research conducted in the U.K. schools explored the active management and manipulation of the examination system in which teachers and examiners have engaged. Some examiners and curriculum developers have advocated that the examination boards could play a constructive role in curriculum development since they control and influence what schools teach; they do not just examine what schools want them to examine.

Weston (1979) and Olson (1982), in studies of the Schools Council Integrated Science Project in Britain,

observed that teachers breached the project's guidelines by teaching from the board and encouraging pupils to take down notes and revise. Teachers attributed this continued use of these transmission-like styles of teaching to the presence of examinations. This in a way was found to be a constraint in their approach to classroom teaching, limiting innovation and inhibiting their desire to explore new teaching strategies.

Similar observations were made by Keith Lewin (1984) when he demonstrated how the "educational tail wags the educational dog" (p. 140), frustrating reform, in his study of an innovative Malaysian Integrated Science course. He noted the negative effects of multiple-choice examinations. Teachers were very critical of the examination, claiming that it discouraged the development of powers of expression, language fluency and understanding by rewarding powers of recognition and recall. Lewin also reported that teachers only teach for examinations; the headmaster, parents and pupils are only interested in examination results. "Good teachers are those who give good notes for examination revision" (p. 140). As one teacher observed "The purpose of the science course is to develop the ability to observe and reason; the purpose of the school is to get as many examination passes as possible" (Lewin, 1984, p. 140).

Her Majesty Inspectors too have pointed to the consequences of teaching with an over-concern for

examinations success. The effect of the dominating pursuit of examinations was to narrow the learning opportunities, especially when work was concentrated on topics thought to be favoured by examiners. In many schools, writing tended to be stereotyped and voluminous - the result of the widespread practice of dictated or copied notes, instead of encouragement to engage in a variety of kinds of writing for different purposes (Department of Education and Science, 1979, p. 248).

It is widely recognized that assessment procedures have a strong influence on both how the curriculum is taught and how pupils approach their study of it. It is also fairly asserted that the curriculum in primary schools, and in further and higher education, are in turn influenced to a considerable extent by the assessments and examinations carried out in secondary schooling. Assessments tend to define what is understood by achievement, and therefore influence what happens before and after they occur (Hargreaves, 1982, cited in Pennycuick and Murphy, 1988, p. 1).

Broadfoot (1979, 1984) pointed out that another major role that examination systems perform in secondary schools is that of selection for further education and employment. She cites this social control function of examinations as one of the major reasons for their continued existence. The great attraction of public examinations is that they are

perceived by many as providing relatively straightforward information about achievement, and the results are based on a system that is thought to be fair and free from major sources of bias or error.

In a survey of employers and others who use examination results as part of their selection procedures, Jones (1984) indicated that the results do not convey anything very specific in terms of level achievement, but are used more as a sieve, before more detailed selection procedures are applied to those applicants who survive the initial part of the selection process. While employers are happy with the selection function of public examination results because they are easier to interpret and use, professional educators are concerned about the influence these examinations have on secondary school curriculum and the way it is taught in schools.

Hargreaves (1989) singled out assessment as the major factor in contributing to underachievement. Public examinations are reported to have led to far too narrow a definition of achievement, and have provided a far too distant and remote target for many students to work towards. It was suggested that the curriculum be broken into smaller units and assess the various aspects of the achievements of the students as they study these units, rather than at a fixed point of time at the end of a two-, three- or four-year course.

In a national study of the uses and perceptions of educational testing among principals and teachers in the United States, Herman and Dorr-Bremme (1984) found that increased testing led to more emphasis on instruction in basic skills, which meant spending more instructional time and more educational resources. Gray, McPherson and Raffe (1983), in their study of Scottish secondary school leavers, found that traditional methods of teaching predominated in students' recollections of their experience. Many felt that there had been a conflict between studying for interest's sake and studying for examination success (Hargreaves, 1989, p. 154)

Studies Undertaken in Africa

There has been little research done on the subject of examinations in Africa by Africans apart from papers presented at international conferences on educational assessment. The recently published Synthesis Report by Kelleghan and Greaney (1992) for the World Bank documented studies done in fourteen countries (Zimbabwe is not one of them).

The current concern in most of the studies and papers is that terminal examinations may not be adequately measuring educational achievement, let alone student progress and individual potential, other than in the narrow academic sense. Their overall effect is one of generating obsession for academic success, and creating a view of education that is almost exclusively instrumental (i.e., equating education with certification) (Kimuli, 1991). The extent to which examinations positively reflect or annul the intentions and emphasis expressed on curricula can be established through an analysis of examinations papers set on the syllabi.

Oxenham and Brooke (1984) indicate that there is usually a playing down of the importance of higher cognitive and attitudinal objectives, let alone any measurement of affective outcomes. They further contend that examination formats have been known to be instrumental in influencing

attitudes towards examinations and learning. Apart from the overall concern with success, students subjected to different formats of examinations may view them as easier or harder and react to them accordingly.

The examinations not only affect students, but they have an impact on schools and individual teachers. It may be true that most teachers are serious about developing the students according to the objectives of education as laid down. There is also the reality that developing all the desirable attributes as judged from the objectives of education but not being selected for a job or further education would not be considered a success by both the teachers and students. There may, therefore, be a point at which even the teachers who would otherwise like to develop the students fully will become examination conscious. Test-centred instruction is the logical consequence of this. Assessment would in this case determine the content and possibly the process of instruction. The power of high-stake testing over instruction is being admitted more openly than ever before (Cele, 1991).

Teaching to the test cheapens instruction and undermines the authenticity of scores as measures of what children really know. Haladayan, Nolan and Hass (1991) asserted that the use of test scores for making important decisions on individuals makes teachers take measures that produce just the right results. Smith (1991) stated that

there is evidence that test results get used against teachers in drastic ways, producing feelings of shame, embarrassment, guilt, anger, and a determination to get out of the situation. As a result, instruction becomes a matter of coaching on how to pass the examination. Teachers concentrate on emphasizing test-taking skills and anxiety-removal drills. Changing students answers, their prior exposure to test items or other forms of malpractices become necessary for survival and social prestige. Whatever educational objectives were laid down remain fuzzy in the background. The more we focus on raising test scores, the more instruction is distorted, and the less credible are the scores themselves.

Where there is high-stake assessment, education reform cannot succeed unless the competitive examination which is immediately more important to the beneficiaries is facilitating and guiding it. It takes a teacher of unique integrity to continue emphasizing the broad aims of education at the expense of the critical examination that is going to determine the future of his/her students, and his/her own (Cele, 1991).

This literature review has shown that there is widespread criticism of the justice and effects of terminal examinations. They lead to an over-emphasis in the curriculum on that which is measured, knowledge and intellectual ability, at the expense of that kind of

education progress which is almost impossible to measure in an end-of-course examination, such as attitudes, skills and personal qualities. In the light of all this evidence, it is the intention in this study to look at teachers' perceptions of the education system, and examinations in particular, and the influence of examinations on schooling at the secondary school level in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter describes the procedures used in the research. Included in this chapter are descriptions of the instrumentation, selection of subjects, a description of the research methodology, and the methods used in processing the data.

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was chosen as the method of investigation. Survey designs can be used to describe the incidence, opinions, ideas and characteristics of a population. In addition surveys can be used to explore relationships between variables (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989). In this study the population is teachers. Teachers' perceptions of the use of examinations for certification and the influence this has on teachers' approach to curriculum at secondary school level was examined. The views and opinions of teachers were sought using a questionnaire.

Sampling Procedures

The Zimbabwe educational system has two categories of schools, Government and Non-Government, and each type has both rural and urban schools. There are also two types of teacher, the trained and the untrained, but the latter are becoming fewer as more and more are being trained each year. Some teachers are trained markers who are actively involved in the marking of the crucial O level examinations. The country is divided into nine regions, and each region has a number of the two categories of schools and types of teacher, although not in equal proportions. There are about 25 000 secondary school teachers and about 8 000 of whom are untrained teachers.

Permission to carry out the research in Zimbabwe was obtained from the Ministry of Education and Culture (see Appendix A). Soon after, the sampling procedure commenced. After initial attempts to obtain a list of schools and teachers from the Planning Division of the Ministry failed, the researcher had to look elsewhere for information. Eventually, a list of all schools offering O level examinations was obtained from the Examinations Branch of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The sample was drawn from practising classroom teachers. An attempt was made to include teachers from each region. Through stratified random sampling, 80 schools from all regions were selected,

from a total of about 1,600 secondary schools. Stratified random sampling had to be employed in order to include teachers from both rural and urban schools. With the help of heads of schools, five teachers from each of the 80 selected schools were identified, making up a population of 400 subjects. It is the researcher's assumption that the type of school and teacher will have a bearing on the responses to the survey.

Instrumentation

The twenty-nine item questionnaire (see Appendix B) used in this study was developed by the author. Responses to twenty-eight items were on a Likert five-point scale. One question was open-ended. All items except the open-ended were clustered into three categories. The categories were (a) examinations as a constraint (items 1, 5, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21); (b) teaching to the test (items 2, 3, 6, 8, 7, 14, 18, 23); and (c) examinations as an indicator of excellence (items 4, 13, 15, 22, 24). Items 25, 26, 27, 28 were meant for the trained markers only. The open-ended question invited subjects to comment on examinations and the effect they have on teaching, quality of school leaver and on admission to post secondary institutions. Other items on the questionnaire requested such demographic information as qualifications, training, experience, teaching

responsibilities and name, which was optional.

The main threat to the validity of the study came from the questionnaire. The instrument was not pilot tested for reliability and validity due to certain constraints such as time and distance. This was certainly a limitation to the study. However, the instrument was checked for content validity by inviting two test construction experts to review it. These experts made comments on the format, clarity, and content of the items. Revisions were made based on these comments. Reliability analyses were conducted on the data obtained from the research sample.

Data Collection

The data were collected in Zimbabwe, between May and July 1993. Four hundred surveys were mailed to heads of the 80 selected schools, who in turn forwarded them to the teachers. A letter to each head containing details on the selection of the subjects was included (see Appendix C). Included with each questionnaire was a letter of transmittal to the teachers, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for return mail (see Appendix D). The letter explained the purpose of the study, the importance of their cooperation and response to the study, an assurance of anonymity, and a promise of a copy of the results where name and address were supplied.

Within two weeks of mailing, responses started pouring in. The response was so overwhelming that there was no need to send reminders. In four weeks over 200 responses were received. The final count was 306, an overall response of 77%.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data generated from the returned questionnaires were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package. Demographic data were analyzed descriptively. Frequency and correlational analyses were performed on Questions 1 - 28 to determine teachers' views and opinions.

Chi-square analysis was performed to examine any differences in responses across the demographic variables. The qualitative data from the open-ended question were coded and classified into categories which were then statistically analyzed for frequencies of responses in each category.

Methodological Assumptions

Three assumptions were made during the course of this research. The researcher assumed that:

1. All the school principals carried out the instructions on the selection of teachers who participated in this study.

2. All teachers completed the surveys truthfully.
3. All teachers participated in the survey freely.

Restatement of Problem Statement

This study is intended to focus mainly on the use of terminal examinations alone for certification and how this affects the way curriculum is taught. Teachers' perceptions of these examinations and the curriculum at secondary school level in Zimbabwe are examined.

Summary

This chapter described the research design of this study. Descriptions of the selection of the subjects, research methodology, data processing, and methodological assumptions were included. The results of the research are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

A total of 306 teachers took part in the survey, 272 of whom were trained teachers. The data that represent the frequency of overall responses to the survey were summarized. Contingency analyses were performed on the data to examine the differences in the responses in respect of training, teacher to student ratio, experience, teaching load and type of school. Tables are provided to summarize the significant results. A second set of analyses was performed on the qualitative data.

Overall Responses

Table 2 provides the full details of demographic variables of the respondents by type of school, qualifications and teaching responsibilities. As indicated earlier, a total of 400 questionnaires were mailed and 306 were completed resulting in an overall response rate of 77%. Of the 306 teachers, 59% were from rural schools and 30% from urban; 59% were from non government schools. The majority, 89% percent were trained teachers with either O level and teaching certificate or university degree with a teaching certificate. Fifty-three percent of the teachers were trained markers who were involved in the marking of O

Table 2

Demographic Data

<u>Type of school</u>	Respondents	Percentage
Rural	180	58.8
Urban	92	30.1
Missing	34	11.1
Government	86	28.1
Non-Government	181	59.2
Missing	39	12.7
<u>Qualifications</u>		
O level + teaching certificate	153	50.0
Degree + teaching certificate	109	35.6
Degree with no training	19	6.2
O or A level with no training	14	4.6
Missing	11	3.6
<u>Training</u>		
Trained Teachers	272	88.9
Untrained Teachers	31	10.1
Missing	3	1.0
<u>Teaching experience</u>		
Years: 1 to 6	170	56.7
7 to 42	130	43.3
Mean: 7.4	sd: 6.4	

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Teaching Responsibilities

Teacher/Student ratio

1 to 30	77	27.7
31 to 50	205	72.2

Mean: 35 sd: 8.4

Teaching Periods

1 to 28	163	53.6
29 to 40	141	46.4

mean: 28 sd: 5.0

Note: A period is 35 or 40 minutes.

Markers

Trained	160	53.3
Untrained	140	46.7
Missing	6	2.0

Classes taught

forms 1 to 4	215	70.3
forms 1 to 6	87	28.4
mixed	4	1.3

level examinations. Teaching experience ranged from 1 to 42 years, with 80% having about 1 to 10 years of experience.

The average teacher student ratio was 1:35, and the average teaching load 28 periods per week. As expected the majority (70%) taught O level classes and 28% taught both O and A level classes.

All items, except 9 and 11, were categorized into three clusters. The categories are (a) examinations as a constraint to teaching (items 1, 5, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21), (a) teaching to the test (items 2, 3, 6, 8, 7, 14, 23, 18), (c) examinations as an indicator of excellence (items 4, 13, 15, 22, 24). A reliability analysis of each category was performed yielding coefficients of .54, .54, and .48 respectively. An examination of the frequencies of responses to each item reveals that the distribution of the data (the majority of individuals answering in one direction) for several items is likely to have influenced the reliability of the categories. Also, as can be seen in Appendix E, inter-item correlations were generally low. This could be due, in part at least, to low variance in the responses to items, and the nature of the data distribution. The reliability of the categories is similarly affected.

However, analysis of the twenty-four items yielded an alpha coefficient of .64, which approaches an acceptable level.

Table 3 is a summary of survey responses to items 1-24. Teachers were asked to indicate their responses on a five-point Likert scale. In the first group of questions that referred to examinations as a constraint, 66% admitted that they constantly refer to examinations while teaching. Forty-nine percent put more effort in examinable subjects than they do in non-examinations subjects with 37% responding negatively. When asked directly whether they feel constrained in their approach to teaching because of the presence of examinations, 43% responded positively and 40% gave a negative response. But when asked whether their approach is influenced by examinations, 69% indicated yes and 20% were neutral. Fifty-four percent regarded the acquisition of knowledge as more important than passing examinations, and 26% were neutral.

On the amount of time spent preparing students to take examinations, 42% felt too much was being spent, 41% responded negatively. While 64% said they cover all areas regardless of whether these are examined or not, 22% did not, and 71% indicated that they teach students according to examination requirements. Finally the majority of teachers, 71%, agreed that examinations are a constraint in that although the teachers would like to develop more complex skills in their students, they feel restricted because of the presence of examinations.

Table 3

Survey Responses: Item 1 - 24 (N=306)

Item	Frequency and percentage						
	1	2	3	4	5	m	sd
1. I constantly refer to examinations while teaching.	12 4%	27 9	69 23	96 31	102 33	3.8	1.1
2. My teaching is geared generally to the examination.	20 7%	36 12	80 26	107 35	60 20	3.4	1.1
3. I transmit facts more than I let students discover.	76 24%	93 30	87 28	23 6	11 4	2.3	1.0
4. I believe exams are a meaningful guarantor of educational excellence.	43 14%	46 15	78 26	74 24	62 20	3.2	3.0
5. I put more effort in examinable subjects than in non-exam subjects.	64 21%	48 16	30 10	78 26	71 23	3.1	1.5
6. I emphasize memorization rather than higher cognitive skills.	190 62%	76 25	23 8	10 3	6 2	1.5	0.9
7. I find myself teaching to the test.	59 19%	89 29	86 28	51 17	14 5	2.5	1.1
8. I use past exam question papers more than I follow the laid down curriculum.	114 37%	105 34	46 15	32 11	8 3	2.0	1.0

Key: 1 = NO
 2 = no
 3 = yes & no
 4 = yes
 5 = YES

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

Item	Frequency and Percentage						
	1	2	3	4	5	m	sd
9. I start preparing students for examinations well before time.	13 % 4	11 4	37 12	92 30	153 50	4.1	1.0
10. I feel constrained in my approach to classroom teaching because of exams.	51 % 17	69 23	54 18	74 24	58 19	3.0	1.3
11. I stop teaching to allow time for studying for exams.	37 % 12	63 21	53 17	106 35	46 15	3.2	1.2
12. I regard acquisition of knowledge as more important than passing exams.	28 % 9	32 11	80 26	73 24	93 30	3.5	1.2
13. I feel exams instil fear and anxiety in students.	12 % 4	28 9	39 13	102 33	124 41	3.9	1.1
14. I spend more time on exam test taking skills than on teaching.	100 % 33	133 44	49 19	19 6	5 6	2.0	0.9
15. I feel I am being evaluated on the basis on of exam results of my students.	23 % 8	23 8	40 13	74 24	146 48	3.9	1.2
16. My approach to teaching is influenced by the examinations.	17 % 6	20 7	60 20	134 44	75 25	3.7	1.0

Key: 1 = NO
 2 = no
 3 = yes & no
 4 = yes
 5 = YES

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

Item	Frequency and Percentage						
	1	2	3	4	5	m	sd
17. I feel too much time is spent preparing students to take exams.	35 % 11	92 30	48 16	90 29	40 13	3.0	1.2
18. I construct my own tests for classroom use.	3 % 1	8 3	51 17	113 37	131 43	4.1	0.8
19. I only cover content areas that are examined.	108 % 35	90 29	41 13	33 11	34 11	2.3	1.3
20. I would like students to develop more complex skills but feel restricted because of exams.	17 % 6	31 10	37 12	107 35	111 36	3.8	1.1
21. I teach my students according to examination requirements.	10 % 3	24 8	57 19	118 39	97 32	3.8	1.0
22. I feel exam results reflect a student's true ability.	69 % 23	75 25	106 35	34 11	22 7	2.5	1.1
23. I rely on past examination papers for classroom-based assessment.	42 % 14	70 23	100 33	72 24	22 7	2.8	1.1
24. I believe examination results are a true measure of teacher effectiveness.	120 % 39	56 18	78 26	35 11	17 6	2.2	1.2

Key: 1 = NO
 2 = no
 3 = yes & no
 4 = yes
 5 = YES

On the items that referred to teaching to the test, 55% said their teaching is structured towards examinations, but when asked directly whether they teach to the test, 48% said they did not and 28% were neutral.

While teaching is generally examination-oriented, 71% do not use past examination papers more than they follow the laid down curriculum, 77% do not spend more time on test-taking skills than on teaching, and 80% indicated they construct their own tests for use in the classroom. But when asked further whether they rely on past examination papers for classroom-based assessment, 37% gave a negative response, 31% a positive response and 33% were neutral.

On the group of questions that refer to examinations as indicators of excellence, 44% regard examinations as meaningful guarantors of excellence, 26% were neutral. Although they perceive examinations as guardians of standards, 48% did not believe that examination results were a reflection of a student's true ability and 35% remained neutral, and 74% feel examinations instil fear and anxiety in students. Although 72% feel they are being evaluated on the basis of their students' examination results, 57% do not believe that examination results are a true measure of teacher effectiveness, and 26% were neutral.

Eighty percent indicated that they start preparing students for examinations well before time, and 50% stop teaching to allow time for studying for examinations.

Table 4 is a summary of responses to survey items 25 - 28 from the 160 trained markers involved in the marking of O level examinations.

Forty-eight percent did not think that being an experienced marker has restricted their approach to teaching, 31% responded positively while 18% were not sure. But 90% believed that they have improved coaching strategies, 70% indicated that they now know what examiners expect, and as a result have increased the number of passes in their classes.

In the open-ended question, teachers were asked to comment on O level examinations and the effect they think examinations have on (a) their teaching, (b) the quality of secondary school leavers, and (c) admission to post secondary institutions. The written responses were coded and classified into categories which were then analyzed to determine the frequencies. The responses are summarized in Tables 5, 6 and 7.

Table 5 is a summary of comments on examinations and teaching. Many feel that examinations are a constraint to their approach to the curriculum and they feel they are being evaluated on the basis of their students' results. They resort to coaching, and spotting of possible exam questions. Teachers claimed that their teaching is exam-oriented and they have become virtual slaves of examinations. A very common comment made was that very

Table 4

Survey Responses: Item 25 - 28: N=160

Item	Frequency and Percentage						m	sd
	1	2	3	4	5			
25. I think my approach to teaching has been further restricted because of the experience I now have as a marker.	38 24	38 24	28 18	30 19	19 12		2.6	1.3
26. I have improved my examination coaching strategies.	0 0	0 0	5 3	50 31	95 59		4.6	0.5
27. I have increased the number of passes as a result of the experience I have gained since my training as a marker.	5 3	5 3	29 18	41 26	60 38		4.0	1.0
28. I know exactly what examiners expect.	5 3	3 2	31 19	52 32	62 38		4.0	0.9

Key: 1 = NO
 2 = no
 3 = yes and no
 4 = yes
 5 = YES

Table 5

Qualitative Results: Item 29: N=306

Examinations and Teachers' Approach to the Curriculum

	Frequency and Percentage	

1. teaching to the test, restrictive restrictive, exam oriented, slaves of examinations.	200	65.5
2. coaching, spotting, memorization.	64	20.9
3. higher cognitive skills not encouraged, not much meaningful teaching going on in classroom.	62	20.3
4. slow learner not accommodated, the not so academic are left out.	8	2.6
5. forced to rush through to meet examinations deadline.	21	6.9
6. set common standards, provide direction, ensures adequate coverage of syllabus.	24	7.8

NOTE:

The total percentage is greater than 100% because some respondents made more than one comment.

Table 6

Examinations and the Quality of Secondary School Leaver

7. poor quality, parrots, shallow, semi-literate, passive, too academic oriented, no wide range of essential skills.	163	53.3
8. white collar job seekers, narrow minded, not creative, not vocational oriented.	83	27.2
9. pass exams but leave school essential concepts and with a false sense of abilities, end up with fragmented knowledge.	40	13.1
10. frustrated, defeated, angry, helpless, labelled failure for life, suicidal.	27	8.9
11. well prepared with some useful skills.	28	9.1

NOTE:

The total percentage is greater 100% because some respondents made more than one comment.

Table 7

Examinations and Admission to Post Secondary Institutions

	Frequency and Percentage	

12. rote learner proceeds to higher levels, talented potential workers are excluded and deprived of chance to prove	94	30.7
13. competitive, barrier, highly selective.	53	30.7
14. nepotism, favouritism, very little influence.	23	7.5
15. fair criterion as there is no better way at present.	83	27.1

NOTE:

The total percentage is greater than 100% because some respondents made more than one comment.

little education goes on in the classroom. As most teachers and students alike are exam-oriented, this narrows the curriculum and limits the development of a desirable state of mind which has depth and breath. Teachers feel they are forced to rush through in order to meet examination deadlines; in the process the slow learner is not accommodated, the not-so-academic left out. A noteworthy comment was given by one of the respondents, who wrote,

It is a sad situation because examinations are restrictive in that teachers confine themselves to suit examinations. Time is wasted trying to instil confidence in students. Since passing examinations is more important than how education moulds the society, most teachers, including myself tend to be exam-centred, trying to make students pass examinations. This is done with very little, if any thought of what effects the education will have in the society.

The principals are always quoting previous pass rates and comparing them from year to year; teachers have to do everything they can, including drilling, coaching and teaching to the test to produce good results.

There were however a few positive comments. Most were on the role played by examinations in setting common standards and providing direction to teachers, thus ensuring an adequate coverage of the syllabus.

Table 6 summarizes teachers' comments on examinations

and the quality of secondary school leavers. The majority of teachers pointed out that because of the emphasis placed on examination success there is a tendency to resort to coaching and drilling resulting in a school leaver who is narrow-minded, shallow and passive. They produce a school leaver who is a half-baked intellectual, semi-literate and does not have a broad based approach to life. One of the common comments made was that the students pass examinations but leave school without the wide range of essential skills required in the world of work. They are unprepared and lack confidence in practical life, as they do not have vocational skills. Too often they leave with a false sense of abilities, and are academic oriented, looking forward to white collar jobs. Those who fail the examinations are labelled a failure for life, are frustrated, feel defeated, helpless, angry, and even suicidal.

A few positive comments were made that described the school leaver as well-prepared with some useful skills. To the intelligent or hardworking self-starter, examinations can be and are challenging in most cases, and an important and interesting evaluative instrument.

Comments on examinations and admission to post secondary institutions are summarized in Table 7. Most teachers felt that since admission is based on achievement in the examination rather than on a student's overall performance during the period, there are obviously some good

students who miss opportunities either because they panicked during the exams or simply were unlucky that their most favourable themes did not appear in the question paper. It is frustrating and painful for teachers to watch a talented student with potential failing to get admitted because he/she has failed the final examination. Some regarded examinations as a barrier to admission, making it very competitive and highly selective. Others felt examinations have very little influence because some institutions prefer testimonials from principals and as a result students with poor results are being admitted through favouritism and nepotism.

Another teacher's comments seem to summarize and express the sense of frustration regarding the use of examinations alone as basis for selection:

Admission based solely on terminal examinations can and has excluded quite often an academically and personally more intelligent student and has given room for the rote learner to proceed to higher levels and, tragically and disastrously so, become the country's education elite in charge of vital decision making for the whole system.

The fact that admission is based solely on the results of the terminal examination forces teachers to coach and teach to the test to make students pass. However quite a number of teachers indicated that in the absence of a better

alternative, examinations remain a fair criterion.

Contingency Analysis

A chi-square analysis was performed to determine any differences in responses across the demographic data, by teaching load, training, teacher to student ratio, teaching experience, type of school and training as a marker. Only those differences that were significant ($p < .05$) are summarized.

A difference was reported between teachers with a teacher to student ratio of up to 38 students and those with over 38, to the item, I emphasize memorization of facts rather than higher cognitive skills. Seventy-six of those with over 38 students gave a neutral response, and 67% responded positively ($\chi^2 = 13.92$, $p = 0.007$) (see Table 8).

The results of the chi-square analysis revealed significant differences by type of school for four items on the survey. Three of these items were found in the teaching to the test category. More rural teachers than urban teachers reported a negative response to the item I transmit facts more than I let students discover ($\chi^2 = 11.86$, $p = 0.01$) (see Table 9). The item I find myself teaching to the test showed a significant difference with more rural teachers indicating a positive response than urban teachers ($\chi^2 = 10.42$, $p = 0.03$)

Table 8**Response by Teacher to Student Ratio to Item 6**

I emphasize memorization of facts rather than higher cognitive skills.

Frequency and percentage							
Ratio		1	2	3	4	5	Total
< 38 students		94	38	5	3	0	140
	%	53	54	24	33	0	49.5
> 38 students		83	32	16	6	6	143
	%	47	46	76	67	100	50.4
Total		177	70	21	9	6	283
	%	63	25	7	3	2	100.0
$\chi^2=13.92$ $df = 4$ $p=0.007$							

Key: 1. = NO
 2. = no
 3. = yes and no
 4. = yes
 5. = YES

(see Table 10). A higher percentage of rural teachers responded positively to the item I use past examination question papers more often than urban teachers. At the same time, more rural teachers gave a negative response than urban teachers ($\chi^2=11.88$, $p=0.01$) (see Table 11).

The item I think my approach to teaching has further been restricted because of the experience I now have as a marker had a higher percentage of urban teachers responding negatively ($\chi^2=16.40$) (see Table 12).

Significant differences were also revealed by teaching experience for six items on the survey. All but one were found in the constraints category.

More experienced teachers remained neutral to the item I constantly refer to examinations while teaching while the less experienced responded positively ($\chi^2=17.24$, $p=.001$) (see Table 13).

To the item, I feel constrained in my approach to teaching because of examinations the less experienced gave a positive response, and the experienced teachers responded negatively ($\chi^2=12.23$, $p=0.015$) (see Table 14).

On the question of whether they regard the acquisition of knowledge as more important than passing examinations, those with less experience responded negatively, while the more experienced chose to be neutral ($\chi^2=16.02$, $p=0.002$) (Table 15).

Table 9

Response by Type of School to Item 3

I transmit facts more than I let students discover.

		Frequency and Percentage					
Type		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Rural		54	49	49	12	4	168
	%	79	58	65	63	36	65.1
Urban		14	35	27	7	7	90
	%	21	42	36	37	64	34.9
Total		68	84	76	19	11	258
	%	26	33	30	7	4	100.0
		x ² =11.86			df =4		p=0.01

Key:

- 1. = NO
- 2. = no
- 3. = yes and no
- 4. = yes
- 5. = YES

Table 10

Response by Type of School to Item 7

I find myself teaching to the test.

Frequency and Percentage							
Type		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Rural		31	46	49	41	9	176
	%	61	50	63	85	69	65.9
Urban		20	31	29	7	4	91
	%	39	40	37	15	31	34.1
Total		51	77	78	48	13	267
	%	19	29	29	18	5	100.0

$$x^2 = 10.42 \quad df = 4 \quad p = 0.03$$

Key:

- 1. = NO
- 2. = no
- 3. = yes and no
- 4. = yes
- 5. = YES

Table 11

Response by Type of school to Item 8

I use past examination question papers more often than I follow the laid down curriculum.

Frequency and percentage							
Type		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Rural		66	65	20	25	3	179
	%	61	71	54	86	38	66.1
Urban		39	27	17	4	5	92
	%	37	29	46	14	63	33.9
Total		105	92	37	29	8	271
	%	39	34	14	11	3	100.0
<hr/>							
$\chi^2 = 16.88 \qquad \text{df} = 4 \qquad \text{p}=0.01$							

$$x^2 = 16.88 \quad df = 4 \quad p=0.01$$

Key:

- 1. = NO
- 2. = no
- 3. = yes and no
- 4. = yes
- 5. = YES

Table 12

Response by Type of school to Item 25

I think my approach to teaching has further been restricted because of the experience I now have as a marker.

Frequency and percentage							
Type		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Rural		11	12	19	13	14	69
	%	32	38	70	46	78	49.6
Urban		23	20	8	15	4	70
	%	68	63	30	54	22	50.4
Total		34	32	27	28	18	139
	%	25	23	19	20	13	100.0
$\chi^2 = 16.40 \qquad df = 4 \qquad p=0.002$							

Key:

- 1. = NO
- 2. = no
- 3. = yes and no
- 4. = yes
- 5. = YES

Table 13

Response by teaching experience to Item 1

I constantly refer to examinations while teaching.

Frequency and percentage							
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
< 6 years		7	10	26	63	64	170
	%	58	37	40	67	62	56.7
> 6 years		5	17	39	31	38	130
	%	41	63	60	33	37	43.3
Total		12	27	65	94	102	300
	%	40	9	21	31	34	100.0
$\chi^2=17.24$ $df=4$ $p=0.001$							

Key:

- 1 = NO
- 2 = no
- 3 = yes and no
- 4 = yes
- 5 = YES

Table 14**Response by Teaching Experience to Item 10**

I feel constrained in my approach to teaching because of examinations

		Frequency and Percentage					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
< 6 years		19	37	28	49	37	170
	%	38	55	52	66	66	56.7
> 6 years		31	30	25	25	19	130
	%	62	44	47	34	34	43.3
Total		50	67	53	74	56	300
	%	16	22	17	25	18	100.0
		$\chi^2=12.23$ $df=4$ $p=0.015$					

Key:

- 1 = NO
- 2 = no
- 3 = yes and no
- 4 = yes
- 5 = YES

Table 16 shows a higher percentage of the less experienced teachers agreed that they would like students to develop more complex skills but feel restricted because of examinations. The more experienced teachers, 64%, gave a negative response ($\chi^2=16.61$, $p=0.002$).

The item, I teach according to examination requirements drew a positive response from more of the less experienced teachers than the experienced teachers ($\chi^2=12.99$, $p=0.01$) (see Table 17).

A greater percentage of the less experienced teachers do not believe that examinations reflect a student's true ability ($\chi^2=10.51$, $p=0.03$) (see Table 18).

Summary of Findings

A total of 306 teachers took part in the survey, 89% of whom were trained, and whose teaching experience ranged from 1 to 42 years, with 80% having up to 10 years experience.

In responses to items on examinations as a constraint to teaching, teachers admitted that they always teach with examinations in mind, but still cover all areas regardless of whether these are examined or not. At the same time they put in more effort in subjects which are examined than they

Table 15

Response by Teaching Experience to Item 12

I regard acquisition of knowledge as more important than passing examinations.

		Frequency and Percentage					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
< 6 years		20	20	31	42	57	170
	%	77	65	39	58	62	56.7
> 6 years		6	11	48	30	35	130
	%	23	36	61	42	38	43.3
Total		26	31	79	72	92	300
	%	9	10	26	24	31	100.0
		$\chi^2=16.02$ $df=4$ $p=0.002$					

Key:

- 1 = NO
- 2 = no
- 3 = yes and no
- 4 = yes
- 5 = YES

Table 16

Response by Teaching Experience to Item 20

I would like students to develop more complex skills but feel restricted because of examinations.

		Frequency and Percentage					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
< 6 years		7	11	17	58	77	170
	%	41	36	47	56	70	57.2
> 6 years		10	20	19	45	33	127
	%	59	65	53	44	30	42.8
Total		17	31	36	103	110	297
	%	6	10	12	35	37	100.0
		$\chi^2=16.61$ $df=4$ $p=0.002$					

Key:

- 1 = NO
- 2 = no
- 3 = yes and no
- 4 = yes
- 5 = YES

Table 17

Response by Teaching Experience to Item 21

I teach my students according to examinations requirements.

		Frequency and Percentage					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
< 6 years		2	13	25	67	63	170
	%	20	54	45	58	67	56.7
> 6 years		8	11	31	49	31	130
	%	80	46	55	42	33	43.3
Total		10	24	56	116	94	300
	%	3	8	19	39	31	100.0
		$\chi^2=13.0$ $df=4$ $p=0.011$					

Key:

- 1 = NO
- 2 = no
- 3 = yes and no
- 4 = yes
- 5 = YES

Table 18**Response by Teaching Experience to Item 22**

Examinations reflect a student's true ability.

		Frequency and Percentage					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
< 6 years		41	52	53	15	9	170
	%	61	69	52	46	41	56.7
> 6 years		26	23	50	18	13	130
	%	39	31	49	55	59	43.3
Total		67	75	103	33	22	300
	%	22	25	34	11	7	100.0
		x ² =10.51 df=4 p=0.03					

Key:

- 1 = NO
- 2 = no
- 3 = yes and no
- 4 = yes
- 5 = YES

do in non-examined subjects. Although a neutral answer was given on whether too much time is spent preparing students for examinations, teachers admitted that they taught according to examination requirements. When asked whether they feel restricted because of presence of examinations, an equal number gave negative and positive responses; however, when asked in the next question, they agreed that although they would like to develop complex learning in their students, they find examinations a constraint to their efforts.

A large percentage of teachers agreed that their teaching is structured towards examinations, but at the same time they stated they did not teach to the test, and did not use past examination question papers more often than constructing their own tests for classroom use. It is interesting to note that, although teaching is generally examination-oriented, most teachers did not spend more time on test-taking skills, but remained neutral when asked whether they rely on past examination question papers for classroom-based assessment.

Forty-four percent of the responding teachers indicated that they regarded examinations as a guarantor of educational excellence, but at the same time they did not believe that examination results reflect a student's true ability, since examinations themselves instil fear and anxiety in students. Teachers were well aware that they are

being evaluated on the basis of their students' results, but still did not believe these were a true measure of teacher effectiveness.

It is noteworthy that while the majority indicated that they did not spend a lot of time on test-taking skills, they nevertheless started preparing students for examinations well before time, and even stopped teaching to allow time for studying for examinations.

Of those teachers involved in the marking of O level examinations, 48% did not think that being a marker has in any way further restricted their approach, and 31% responded that it has. However, teachers trained as markers admitted that the experience they now have has helped them improve examination coaching techniques, and this was reflected in the increase in number of passes in their classes.

The open-ended question provided teachers with the opportunity to comment freely on examinations and the influence they have on their teaching, students and on admission to post secondary institutions. Many felt examinations were a constraint, and since they feel they are being evaluated on the basis of students' results, they resorted to coaching, drilling and spotting of possible examination questions. The type of student produced at the end is shallow, without a broad-based approach to life. Examinations have made admission to tertiary institutions competitive and highly selective, at the same time allowing

the rote learner to proceed to higher levels. Teachers also admitted that since there was no better way, at present, of assessing students, terminal examinations remained the only fair criterion.

The chi-square analyses reported differences by type of school for items in the teaching to the test category. Other significant differences were revealed in responses to items in the constraints category by teaching experience.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This chapter includes a general summary of the study, a discussion of the results, and conclusions drawn from the data analysis and findings. Under recommendations, implications for practice, and further research are discussed.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to examine teachers' perceptions of terminal examinations and the curriculum at the secondary school level in Zimbabwe. The focus was mainly on the use of terminal examinations for certification, how this affected the way curriculum is taught and how students approach it. The system of using a final written examination alone may not present a true picture of the student's abilities. Terminal examinations may not be adequately measuring educational achievement, let alone student progress, other than in the narrow academic sense. The teachers' decisions on the teaching methods, objectives, and the interpretation and use of the curriculum become wholly guided and prescribed by national examinations.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two showed that

there is widespread criticism of the justice and effects of terminal examinations which are thought to lead to an over-emphasis in the curriculum on that which is measured: knowledge and intellectual ability. This is done at the expense of the kind of education progress which is almost impossible to measure in an end-of-course examination, such as attitudes, skills and personal qualities. Parental anxiety and pressure from the public for examination success is bound to have an effect on teachers' behaviour and students' learning. It was the intention in this study to look at the terminal examinations, and in particular the O level examinations, and teachers' perceptions of their effects at the secondary school level in Zimbabwe.

Three hundred and six secondary school teachers from eighty schools offering the O level examinations responded to a survey designed to assess their views and opinions on terminal examinations. The results of the findings indicated that teaching is structured towards examinations and that teachers feel that success in examinations is not a reflection of a student's true ability as some important attributes are not assessed in an end-of-course summative evaluation.

Discussion

Examinations as Constraints

Teachers' responses to items on examinations as a constraint to teaching indicated that most teachers teach with examinations in mind, but still cover all areas regardless of whether they are examined or not. At the same time they put in more effort in subjects that are examined than they do in non-examined subjects. Although a neutral answer was given on whether too much time was spent on preparing students for examinations, teachers admitted they taught according to examination requirements. They agreed that although they would like to develop complex learning in their students they find examinations a constraint in their efforts. From this it can be concluded that teachers are trying to teach and develop reasoning skills and problem-solving activities, but the pressure of examinations and the importance of doing well in them force teachers to restrict themselves to examinations requirements.

This was clearly stated in the free response survey question. A common comment made was that terminal examinations influence teachers in a number of ways. The requirement and demands must be satiated before students can attempt to write the examination. Teaching material that is outside assessment objectives may waste time for students

who are expected to pass if they are to advance with their education. In most cases teachers tend to concentrate on areas which appear to be tested more frequently and ignore themes vital to proper understanding of the concepts. In some cases students have been made to memorize model answers, thus adversely affecting the proper learning process. Some teachers did not even allow students to carry out experiments in science for they believe that practical activities waste their teaching time. Similar observations were made by Kelleghan and Greaney (1992): that topics and skills if not covered by examinations, even though specified in the curriculum, will be ignored in classroom teaching. Examinations emphasize the accumulation of factual knowledge, neglecting reasoning skills and problem-solving activities.

In their study, Singh et al. (1988) came up with similar evidence pertaining to the almost obsessional concern with examinations and superior performance in school. They observed that in school the total teaching-learning process is geared generally to the examination syllabi and more specifically to the skills demanded in these examinations which place heavy reliance on memory, recall, reproduction, drill, model answers, and knowing what examiners expect.

However, contingency analyses showed that teaching experience had an influence on the responses to the

questions in the constraint category. The less experienced use examinations as a point of reference, but the more experienced were neutral. For the less experienced teachers examinations are a constraint; although they would like to develop a broader-minded student, they find the presence of examinations a stumbling block in their efforts. The experienced teachers do not find examinations restrictive, but were undecided when asked whether they taught according to examinations requirements. A possible explanation for this may be that the new teachers still have the idealistic view of teaching the way they learned in training and when they are out in the field they are faced with a different situation altogether. They realise that it is not just teaching and learning but passing examinations as well. As a result examinations become the focal point. On the other hand the more experienced teachers feel otherwise. It is possible that they have become so accustomed to the system that they are not aware of it.

Probably, because of these constraints, more less-experienced teachers feel that examination results do not reflect a student's true ability. It should be noted though that I have not come across research to confirm these findings.

Examinations and Teaching

Teachers indicated that they regarded examinations as a guarantor of excellence, but at the same time they did not believe that examination results reflect a student's true ability since examinations instilled fear and anxiety in students. Teachers were well aware that they are being evaluated on the basis of their students results', but still did not believe these were a true measure of teacher effectiveness. It is noteworthy that while the majority indicated that they did not spend a lot of time on test taking skills, they nevertheless started preparing students for examinations well before time and even stopped teaching to allow time for studying for examinations. There is pressure to do well; at school principals are always quoting pass rates of yesteryears and comparing them. As a result teachers resorted to coaching, drilling and spotting of possible examination questions to produce the desired grades. Their teaching has become wholly guided by examinations and much not meaningful learning goes on in the classroom. While they would like to accommodate the slow learner, in mixed ability classes as much as possible, they found it difficult, as teachers are forced to rush through to meet examinations deadlines.

The findings are supported by previous studies on the subject. The pressure to do well is felt from all quarters,

parents, teachers, the school and the community. Parents watch or monitor grades and treat all examinations with great concern. Quite clearly the focus is on passing examinations well and obtaining the right credentials, rather than the actual educative process (Singh et al., 1988).

Active involvement, designing, exploration, problem solving, collecting evidence and experimentation are rare events (Lewin & Lu, 1988). Broadfoot (1979) pointed out that assessment commonly has backwash effect on the curriculum and on the process of teaching and learning that goes on with it. Assessment therefore operationalizes educational goals as much as it reflects them.

Examinations led to a restricted curriculum and a restricted view of what was worth teaching and learning in secondary school. The result was that aspects of education such as the capacity to act responsibly, to cooperate, to initiate activities, and to solve problems were undervalued as educational goals and achievements of young people precisely because they were not examined (Burgess & Adams, 1980).

In a study on assessment of students' technical/practical subjects in secondary school in Zimbabwe, Chinyamunzore (1989) found that teachers teach very much with national examinations as a point of reference. Teachers model their assessment on what

examinations are looking for, and freedom to use appropriate methods of instruction is hampered.

Examinations and Learning

On the question of how students approach the study of the curriculum and the type of secondary school leaver, teachers pointed out the negative effects examinations have. From their responses it can be concluded that examinations give too narrow a definition of achievement. Because of the emphasis placed on examination success, there is a tendency for coaching and drilling resulting in a school leaver who is narrow-minded, shallow, and passive. Although the student passes the examinations, he/she leaves school without essential skills, and with a false sense of his/her abilities. They narrow the student's already narrowed approach to education and learning, and destroy the student's initiative to find out unless there is an examination looming. For the slow or weaker students the process can destroy self-confidence.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Burgess and Adams (1980), and Mortimore and Mortimore (1984): that public examinations have a major influence in distorting the curriculum and pupils' perceptions of successful achievement in such a way that a large proportion of secondary school children become disillusioned and leave school with a

general sense of alienation and failure.

Lewin (1984) noted the negative effects of multiple-choice examinations and how teachers were critical of such examinations claiming that they discourage the development of the powers of expression, language fluency and understanding by rewarding powers of recognition and recall.

It is also interesting to note that analyses by type of school revealed significant differences in as far as teaching to the test is concerned. This could be attributed to the fact that most of the rural schools lack adequate resources. There is a shortage of books, reading and writing material. The teacher is forced to coach and drill students if they are to make it in the examinations. A point to note here is that there are some schools which are in a rural setting but very well-equipped. These are the old and established mission schools and trust schools which charge very high fees. Teachers from these schools may influence the results by type of school.

Rural school teachers indicated that they teach to the test and use past examination papers more often in their teaching. This could be attributed to the limited resources.

Class size also has influence on teaching approach. Teachers with large classes tend to encourage memorization more than teachers with smaller classes.

Those teachers involved in the marking of O level

examinations did not think that being a marker has further restricted their approach on what should be taught.

However, they admitted that the experience and knowledge they now have helped them improve examination techniques and that they have been rewarded with an increase in the number of passes in their classes. With this inside information, teaching tends to be concentrated on test-taking skills which will produce higher grades in certificates.

Again differences were noted in the responses. Rural school teachers admitted that their approach to teaching has further been restricted because of the experience they now have as markers, while a larger percentage of urban school teachers responded it has not. This again could be due to the limited resources. This experience has become a valuable asset to their coaching strategies.

Admission to Post Secondary Institutions

From the teachers' comments on the influence examinations have on admission into post secondary institutions and the labour market, it is obvious this has become a very competitive and therefore highly selective process, and dependent on the minimum requirement of five O level passes. The O level examinations play a major role in selection for further education and employment and this in a way influences the learning process.

In his publication The Diploma Disease, Dore (1976) wrote extensively on the relationship between education and the labour market. Qualifications represent the primary recruitment criterion into the labour market. Those with better qualifications stand a better chance of entering the prestigious occupations. As a result, the acquisition of qualifications assumes primacy in the schooling process. Learning is motivated by the desire to obtain good credentials, consequently, rote learning results, and education becomes a mere process of certification.

Why individuals learn determines why they work and how effectively they work, Singh, Marimuthu and Mukherjee (1988) observed. Those who have indulged in learning merely as qualification learning reduce the learning process to being ritualistic, tedious, suffused with anxiety and boredom, destructive of curiosity and imagination (p. 178).

Recommendations

Implications for Practice

The findings in this study indicate that terminal examinations have a profound influence on teachers' approach to the curriculum. Assessment procedures are seen to have a strong influence on both how the curriculum is taught and how students approach their study of it. Assessment

objectives exert a powerful impact on teaching and learning in our schools. It was also found that the system of using a final written examination alone for certification is inadequate in that it may not present a true picture of student abilities. The question that comes to mind here is whether we should be assessing the product or the process, or both.

Broadfoot (1984) contends that there is no doubt that the public view of assessment in schools has been dominated by both the selection function and the demands of accountability. This social control function of examinations is cited as one of the major reasons for their continued existence. Both these functions are necessary, but what is also necessary is the need to ensure that these particular purposes or functions of educational assessment are not allowed to dominate the entire school curriculum and the wide range of formative assessment procedures that teachers can engage in.

Pennycuick (1989) in a criticism of the complete dependency on the terminal examination results alone, pointed out that assessment procedures are frequently carried out towards the end of a course, are veiled in secrecy, and when given to the student are usually coded in a language which gives them little constructive insight into the nature of their performance. Furthermore, the widespread practice of not returning examination scripts or

test papers to students, and not revealing marking procedures, or entering into any kind of post-assessment discussion of individuals, are all features of an approach to assessment which emphasizes the "rites of entry" selection and functions to destroys most if not all educational benefits which could be derived from it (Pennycuick, 1989, p. 67).

There is need for alternative assessment procedures in an education system that gives students multiple opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned. It should be inclusive in terms of encompassing both a broad range of achievements and experiences of the student. Such alternative or school-based assessment would be concerned mainly with promoting good education by ensuring that assessment facilitates the curriculum and teaching approaches being followed rather than cutting across them.

Alternative or teacher-based assessment is not without its problems. A study of the operation of continuous assessment in a Nigerian state, highlighted major problems as being: inadequate conceptualization; doubtful validity; and inadequate structural and administrative infrastructure. Teachers may lack experience and expertise in assessment procedures necessitating the need to provide adequate in-service training, which might be very costly.

It was not the intention of this study to discredit terminal examinations, but to point out their shortcomings

and suggest alternatives to complement them. As Kellegan and Greaney (1992) argued it would be unrealistic to talk of dispensing with the present examinations system, given the lack of resources for introducing alternative assessment procedures, and the importance attached to these examinations by the public. This view also recognizes the fact that the need for selection will continue in the foreseeable future, and that examinations are perceived by many to be relatively fair and impartial, and that they serve to legitimize the allocation of scarce educational benefits, such as employment.

It should also be recognized that examinations, if properly designed, could have a beneficial effect on the quality of education in school. Some of the benefits were cited by teachers in this study, such as the role played by examinations in setting common standards, providing direction to teachers and ensuring an adequate coverage of the curriculum. Because of the high stakes associated with these examinations in terms of student opportunities and teacher accountability, changes in assessment would most likely be reflected in changes in educational practice in schools. If changes involve improving the quality and scope of examinations, these should in turn result in improving the educational experiences of students in school. Any changes in educational assessment should, in this sense, be planned in accordance with changes in the curriculum. In

other words, as Hargreaves (1989) pointed out assessment and curriculum reform should be undertaken together, with planned coherence. Otherwise assessment changes alone will simply shape the curriculum by default.

In the light of the current localisation program in the country, the Curriculum Development Unit and the Examinations Branch of the Ministry of Education and Culture should get together and come up with assessment procedures that will make teaching and learning more meaningful in our schools. Assessment procedures that test a wide range of abilities and give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they are capable of, need to be explored.

Implications for Research

The current study examined teachers' perceptions of examinations in general, with no specific subject discipline in mind. Future research could focus on particular subjects, as teachers might view effects of examinations differently depending on the subjects they teach.

It would be interesting to be able to expand this study to look at the examination syllabus of a particular subject discipline and do a detailed item analysis of the question papers just to find out the level of skills examined and how the format influences attitudes towards examinations and

learning. In the light of changes taking place in examinations at secondary school level in Zimbabwe, it will be worthwhile to examine continuous assessment procedures that can complement the present system for certification.

Research could be conducted on employers' perceptions of the secondary school leavers now flooding the labour market. This may help find ways to improve assessment procedures.

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Appendix A

Letter of Permission from Ministry

REF: C/426/3

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
P.O. Box 8022
CAUSEWAY

May 1993

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH ON

In reference to your application to carry out a research on the above mentioned topic in the Ministry of Education and Culture's Institutions, permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Head of the Unit/Branch/Region for clearance before carrying out your research.

You are also required to supply the Ministry of Education and Culture with a final copy of your research which may contain information useful to the development of education in Zimbabwe.

Ministry of Education

- - MAY 1993

P.O. Box 8022 Causeway
Zimbabwe

L.D. Nziramasanga
for SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

B/NM

Appendix B The Questionnaire

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TERMINAL EXAMINATIONS AND THE CURRICULUM AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN ZIMBABWE.

Please fill in the following information. If you prefer anonymity you are free to leave out your name.

Name:..(optional).....

Name of School:.....

Is your school: ☐ Rural ☐ urban
 ☐ government ☐ nongovernment

Region:.....

Qualifications:.....

Trained Teacher: ☐ yes ☐ no

Teaching Experience (no. of years):.....

Teaching Subjects:.....

Forms:.....

Average Teacher/Student Ratio:.....

No. of teaching periods per week:

Trained Marker : ☐ yes ☐ no

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please read each statement below and respond using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
<i>NO!</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>yes & no</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>YES!</i>

You are only required to write down the number of your response in the space provided at the beginning of each statement.

- ___ 1. I constantly refer to examinations while teaching.
- ___ 2. My teaching is geared generally to the examination.
- ___ 3. I transmit facts more than I let students discover.
- ___ 4. I believe examinations are a meaningful guarantor of educational excellence.
- ___ 5. I put in more effort in examinable subjects than I do in non-exam subjects.
- ___ 6. I emphasize memorization of facts rather than higher cognitive skills.
- ___ 7. I find myself teaching to the test.
- ___ 8. I use past examination question papers more often than I follow the laid down curriculum.
- ___ 9. I start preparing /coaching students for examinations well before time.
- ___ 10. I feel constrained in my approach to classroom teaching because of examinations.

- ___ 11. I stop teaching to allow time for studying for examinations.
- ___ 12. I regard acquisition of knowledge as more important than passing examinations.
- ___ 13. I feel examinations instil fear and anxiety in students.
- ___ 14. I spent more time on exam preparation/ test taking skills than on teaching.
- ___ 15. I feel I am being evaluated on the basis of examination results of my students.
- ___ 16. My approach to teaching is influenced by the examinations
- ___ 17. I feel too much time is spent preparing students to take examinations.
- ___ 18. I construct my own tests for classroom use.
- ___ 19. I only cover content areas that are examined.
- ___ 20. I would like students to develop more complex learning but feel restricted because of examinations.
- ___ 21. I teach my students according to examination requirements.
- ___ 22. I feel examination results reflect a student's true abilities.
- ___ 23. I rely on past examination questions for classroom - based assessment.
- ___ 24. I believe examination results are a true measure of teacher effectiveness.

Answer the questions (i.e. 25, 26, 27, and 28) below only if you are a trained marker.

___ 25. I think my approach to teaching has been further restricted because of the experience I now have as a marker.

___ 26. I have improved my examination coaching strategies.

___ 27. I have increased the number of passes as a result of the knowledge I have gained since my training as a marker.

___ 28. I know exactly what examiners expect.

29. Comment on terminal examinations (O level) and the influence they have on:

a) the way teachers approach the curriculum:

b) the quality of secondary school leavers:

c) admission to post secondary institutions:

Appendix C

Letter to Heads of Schools

*All communications should be
addressed to The Secretary for
Primary and Secondary Education.*

Telephone: 304118, 304551/3

302622/4

Telegraphic Address: "EXAMED"

Telex: 24254, 22141

Facsimile: 302288



Reference:

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & CULTURE

P.O. Box 8537

Causeway

Harare

Zimbabwe


Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Survey on Examinations and the Curriculum

We are carrying out a survey on teachers' perceptions of terminal examinations and the curriculum. Your cooperation is requested in this exercise. Please find enclosed five survey forms which should be given to five teachers at your school, teaching "O" level classes. These should include one teacher each of English, Shona/Ndebele, Mathematics, Science, and Geography/History. When completed the teacher should return the form using the attached envelop.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

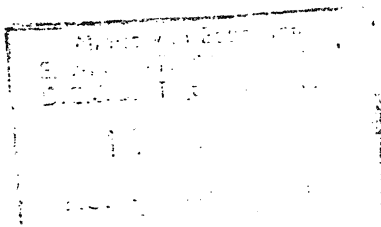
Sincerely,


O. Mojapelo, (Mrs.)

Research Assistant: Evaluation and Analysis.


I.I. Dambudzo.

Acting D.C.E.O.: Test Development and Research.



Appendix D
Letter of Transmittal

May, 1993.

Dear Colleague,

This study concerns examinations and the curriculum. It is intended to examine teachers' perceptions of terminal examinations and the curriculum at secondary school level, focusing mainly on the 'O'level examination. Your personal contribution is very important, as teachers are the ones who are in touch, and are familiar with what really goes on in the classroom.

The findings will be used for my Master of Education Project which I am doing under the supervision of Professor Patricia Cranton of Brock University, Canada. Please fill in the survey form as truthfully as possible and feel free to give any other information you may consider relevant and important. When completed, please return the form using the enclosed envelop.

If you would like to know the results of this study, please supply your name and address, so that a summary of the findings will be sent to you. I look forward to receiving your input and thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Ottilia Mojapelo.

Project advisor,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. Cranton".

Dr. P. Cranton.

Appendix E
Inter-item Correlations

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	1.00					
2.	.37**	1.00				
3.	.01	.13	1.00			
4.	.09	.14	-.09	1.00		
5.	.08	.24**	.17*	.11	1.00	
6.	.02	.25**	.21**	-.14	.28**	1.00
7.	.17*	.31**	.20**	-.11	.24**	.30**
8.	.14	.22**	.17	.01	.24**	.30**
9.	.15*	.14*	-.06	.08	.08	.08
10.	-.01	-.01	.15	-.11	.23**	.10
11.	-.06	.10	-.09	.08	.08	.12
12.	-.06	-.30**	-.10	-.17	-.24**	-.15*
13.	.04	.07	.04	-.05	.14	.08
14.	.10	.25**	.15*	.03	.17*	.19**
15.	.09	.07	.18*	.00	.13	.02
16.	.12	.22**	.04	.03	.28**	.11
17.	-.04	-.12	.16*	-.13	.08	.14
18.	.01	-.06	-.10	.09	-.09	.01
19.	.11	.15*	.21**	-.08	.22**	.36**
20.	.08	-.02	.07	-.13	.14	.13
21.	.33**	.33**	-.06	.07	.13	.07
22.	.07	.14	.00	.42**	.12	-.08
23.	.10	.07	-.04	.04	.07	.16*
24.	.04	.06	-.01	.26**	.04	-.07
25.	.02	.04	.15	-.01	.18	.21**
26.	.12	.16	.02	.04	.06	-.16
27.	.09	.06	-.05	.16	.10	-.12
28.	.20	.10	.07	.10	.02	.01

(table continues)

Item	7	8	9	10	11	12
7.	1.00					
8.	.32**	1.00				
9.	.08	.03	1.00			
10.	.20**	.16*	-.10	1.00		
11.	.00	.11	-.03	-.14	1.00	
12.	-.10	-.20**	-.04	.08	-.02	1.00
13.	.15*	-.11	.10	.15*	.02	.13
14.	.30**	.37**	.10	.11	.04	-.14*
15.	.13	.09	-.00	.29**	.05	-.05
16.	.21**	.22**	.17*	.21**	-.03	-.18
17.	.15*	.14	-.06	.25**	-.02	.10
18.	-.03	-.16*	.16*	-.04	-.03	-.12
19.	.24**	.30**	-.11	.23**	.04	-.20
20.	.12	.07	-.01	.43**	-.03	.07
21.	.17*	.13	.11	-.00	-.02	-.12
22.	-.01	-.03	.03	-.18*	.05	-.11
23.	-.04	.19**	.10	.02	-.03	-.22**
24.	-.00	.07	.03	-.11	.10	-.22**
25.	.38**	.15	-.04	.18	-.00	-.05
26.	.13	.07	.16	.07	.11	-.24*
27.	-.01	-.06	.17	-.24*	-.04	-.24*
28.	.13	.18	.03	.07	-.05	-.14

Item	13	14	15	16	17	18
13.	1.00					
14.	.06	1.00				
15.	.29**	.18*	1.00			
16.	.12	.11	.23**	1.00		
17.	.21**	.17*	.22**	.20**	1.00	
18.	.08	-.08	-.10	.03	-.07	1.00
19.	.09	.09	.11	.20**	.13	-.13
20.	.25**	.06	.28**	.14*	.31**	-.07
21.	.04	.16*	.06	.24**	.00	-.4
22.	-.20**	-.04	-.09	.20	-.20**	-.06
23.	-.02	.01	-.03	.16*	.01	-.13
24.	-.16*	.03	-.07	.15*	-.11	-.06
25.	.16	.08	.17	.23*	.18	-.11
26.	.07	.00	.12	.06	-.10	.10
27.	-.84	-.02	-.05	.11	-.11	.03
28.	-.02	.02	.09	-.03	.34	.03

(table continues)

Item	19	20	21	22	23	24
19.	1.00					
20.	.21**	1.00				
21.	.26**	.08	1.00			
22.	-.06	-.23**	.11	1.00		
23.	.17*	.04	.26**	.16*	1.00	
24.	.05	-.23**	.04	.42**	.25**	1.00
25.	.27**	.29**	.12	-.05	.08	-.16
26.	-.03	.04	.17	-.00	.07	.01
27.	.00	-.22*	.21*	.26*	.18	.23
28.	.02	.01	.16	.16	.14	-.00

Item	25	26	27	28
25.	1.00			
26.	-.02	1.00		
27.	-.06	.25*	1.00	
28.	.01	.39**	.41**	1.00